

1916

MUSTANG DAILY

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

TODAY'S WEATHER

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Low 47°



Find out the 20 most popular songs on the European continent

IN ARTS&CULTURE, 5

BASEBALL

Get a preview of the Mustangs' Big West competition

IN SPORTS, 8



Volume LXVIII, Number 92

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mustangdaily@calpoly.edu



TOM SANDERS MUSTANG DAILY

As students marched through Cal Poly Tuesday, they shouted 'Si, se pueda,' which means 'yes, it can be done.' Participants in the march said the low turnout shows how little people know about Chavez

STUDENTS MARCH TO HONOR CHAVEZ

Chavez used non-violent protests, such as fasts and strikes, to create a better working environment for migrant farmworkers

Amanda Strachan
MUSTANG DAILY

Although the state holiday commemorating Cesar Chavez was last Thursday, a handful of students marched through campus Tuesday afternoon to raise awareness about Chavez.

"A lot of people know we have it off but they don't know why," business major Daisy Cisneros said.

The group gathered for the march was small, something participants say is a sign that more students should be aware of Chavez and his contributions.

"Just looking at the people here, there's not a lot of support," civil engineering senior Juan Ochoa said. "There's a lot of people that don't really know about him, and if they do know about him they don't know enough to realize what he was fighting for."

Chavez was a migrant farm-worker dedicated to organizing and improving the lives of his fellow workers.

"My dad was a farmworker and when I was growing up I got to see the conditions that the farmworkers worked in," said Maria Arvizu-Rodriguez, adviser for the Hispanic business student association. "I firmly believe that Cesar Chavez was onto something really good. He actually accomplished a great deal in terms of changing those working conditions."

Chavez worked for more than three decades as a leader of the first successful farm workers union. In that time he made many improvements for the workers such as increasing their wages, working for medical coverage and improving their living conditions.

Chavez worked for change through non-violent protests. He staged fasts, boycotts, strikes and pilgrimages.



Cesar Chavez

"He was a leader that pretty much gave up his life and sacrificed his family for what he believed in."

— JUAN OCHOA
civil engineering senior

"He was a leader that pretty much gave up his life and sacrificed his family for what he believed in," Ochoa said. "I'm here to thank him for what he did and also to carry on his message."

The group carried signs and shouted "Si se pueda," Chavez's motto in life which translates to "yes it can be done."

"We want for younger Chicanos, Mexican Americans, people that come from the working class, to know that yes it can be done," Arvizu-Rodriguez said.

Although Chavez died in 1993, his legacy is carried on through the Cesar Chavez foundation, created by his family, and through organizations like the Hispanic Business Student Association who put on Tuesday's march.

Laborers still face poor working conditions and low wages but now Chavez's message has spread and some students feel it is their obligation to continue it.

"I have a college education and I feel it's even more of a reason to fight," civil engineering senior Enoc Lira said. "Unfortunately many migrant farmworkers are not getting the best education so I feel it is my responsibility to graduate and work for these people who cannot or find it difficult to defend themselves."

Future of Coastal Commission uncertain



ASSOCIATED PRESS

From Big Sur to Bolsa Chica, California has one of the world's most pristine coastlines, which is protected by the Coastal Commission.

Terence Chea
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO — From the soaring cliffs of Big Sur to the teeming wetlands of Bolsa Chica, California has one of the world's most pristine and protected coasts, drawing millions of people each year to its sandy beaches and rugged shores.

Conservationists say that's no accident, it's the result of a voter initiative passed more than 30 years ago that created the California Coastal Commission, the powerful government agency charged with protecting and restoring the state's 1,100-mile coastline.

The California Supreme Court hears arguments Wednesday in a case that will determine the future of the commission, which has made more than 100,000 decisions over the past three decades.

The commission has made its share of enemies, especially among seaside residents and real estate developers who say the panel routinely tramples on private property rights and harbors an extreme environmental agenda.

"Year after year, the Coastal Commission has displayed an unbridled arrogance against people living on the coast," said James Burling, an attorney for the Pacific Legal Foundation. **see Coast, page 2**

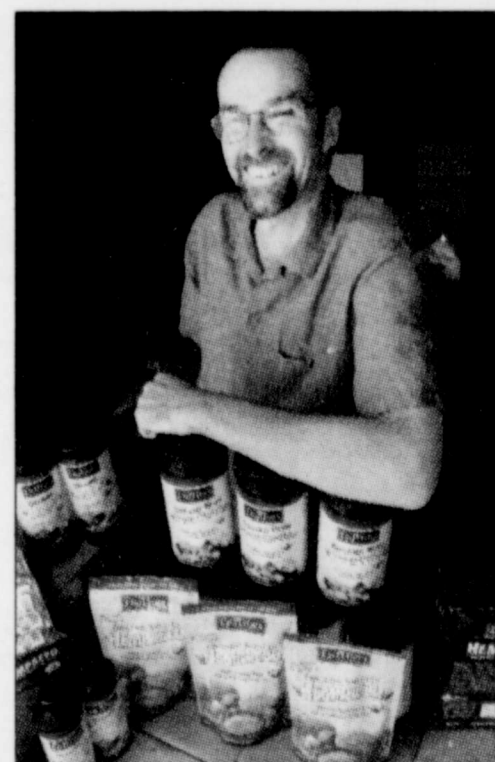
Bill to allow hemp farming in California pending Legislature

Steve Lawrence
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO — John Roulac wants to give California agriculture a boost and cut his transportation costs at the same time.

Roulac is the founder and chief executive officer of Nutiva, an up-and-coming organic food company that is based in California but that processes and packages most of its products in Canada. The reason: Nutiva sells bars, protein powder, seeds and oil made with hemp, a cousin of marijuana.

Hemp has only a trace of tetrahydrocannabinols, or THC, the drug in marijuana, but hemp can't be legally grown in the United States without a permit from the Drug Enforcement Administration. And the DEA has only allowed an experimental grow, **see Hemp, page 2**



ASSOCIATED PRESS

John Roulac, president of Nutiva, poses with some hemp products.

Coast

continued from page 1

Foundation, which advocates for private property rights. "The Coastal Commission has perverted its initial mission into a power grab for itself."

The plaintiffs in the case before the court argue the commission is unconstitutional because it wields executive powers, yet two-thirds of its commissioners are chosen by legislators.

"The stakes for Californians and future generations are enormous. It's

the future of the coast," said Peter Douglas, who has directed the commission for the past 20 years. "Whether it continues to go in the direction of conservation and restoration, or whether we open the gates to pell-mell development."

Hemp

continued from page 1

imental plot in Hawaii, according to Adam Eidinger, a spokesman for Vote Hemp, the lobbying arm of the hemp industry.

So Nutiva contracts with Canadian farmers for its hemp, processes it in Canada and imports the finished products.

"We pay Exxon and Chevron a lot of money for gasoline for truckers," said Roulac. "We'd rather pay that money to California farmers to grow a sustainable crop."

Assemblyman Mark Leno has a bill that could make that happen. The San Francisco Democrat's measure would allow the state

Department of Food and Agriculture to issue licenses to grow and process hemp.

Bills similar to Leno's are pending in New Hampshire and Oregon. North Dakota approved hemp cultivation in 1999, and this year the governor signed a bill allowing the state university to try to develop improved hemp seeds in anticipation of the removal of the federal ban on hemp farming.

Hemp can be used to make a myriad of products, including clothing, cosmetics, food, paper, rope, jewelry, luggage, sports equipment and toys. As food, hemp is high in essential fatty acids, protein, B vitamins and fiber, its supporters say.

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The Foundation Board of Directors serves as the governing body for the Cal Poly Foundation.

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STATE NEWS

SANTA MARIA — Michael Jackson's former maid testified Tuesday that she found the singer showering with a boy who often slept in the pop star's bed and that Macaulay Culkin also stayed in his bedroom.

The maid was called to the stand in Jackson's child molestation trial after her own son came under tough cross-examination about his story of being molested more than

a decade ago and repeatedly pleaded a poor memory about even recent interviews on the matter.

The woman was called as part of a prosecution effort to show that Jackson has a pattern of inappropriate behavior with boys.

The former maid's son received a \$2.4 million settlement from Jackson in 1994. Before the woman took the stand, defense attorney Thomas Mesereau showed she had been paid \$20,000 to appear on the TV show "Hard Copy."

LOS ANGELES — Prayers in Hebrew and Arabic mingled with Buddhist and Greek Orthodox funeral chants in the city's flagship cathedral Tuesday as leaders from nearly a dozen religious faiths paid tribute to Pope John Paul II in an unadorned and heartfelt service.

As organ music swelled, a line of Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Greek Orthodox and evangelical Christian leaders processed into the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels and filed past

a poster-sized photo of John Paul.

SACRAMENTO — Assembly Democrats on Tuesday proposed a plan involving tax cuts and increases that they said would generate nearly \$60 billion for transportation projects over the next 30 years.

The legislation would put a \$10 billion transportation bond measure on the ballot in 2006. It would also eliminate the sales tax on gasoline, cutting prices about 11 cents a gallon.

—Associated Press

IN OTHER NEWS

NEW YORK — A deliveryman who vanished after taking Chinese food to a Bronx apartment complex was found alive Tuesday after apparently spending four days trapped in an elevator that had become stuck between floors.

Ming Kuang Chen, 35, had been the subject of a widespread search after he failed to return to his restaurant Friday with \$200 in receipts.

Firefighters were called to the apartment complex early Tuesday after getting a complaint that someone was stuck in the elevator.

"They said, 'We think the guy's drunk. We can't understand him,'" fire Lt. Peter Chadwick told The New York Times.

"Little did they know he wasn't drunk, but probably feeling the effects of being in an elevator for days," he said.

Chen, a native of China, also speaks little English.

He was suffering from dehydration, said Dr. Babak Toosi at Montefiore Medical Center.

Chen had made three deliveries to the apartment complex but failed to return to the Happy Dragon restaurant. Police conducted a door-to-door canvass of the apartment complex and searched a nearby reservoir.

—Associated Press

NATIONAL NEWS

NEW YORK — Peter Jennings, who revealed he has lung cancer Tuesday, plans to continue on "World News Tonight" as much as he can after beginning chemotherapy next week. Jennings, ABC's chief anchorman since 1983, planned to be at his desk Tuesday, a day after getting his diagnosis.

WASHINGTON — The Bush

administration's two top law enforcement officials on Tuesday urged Congress to renew every provision of the anti-terror Patriot Act. FBI Director Robert Mueller also asked lawmakers to expand the bureau's ability to obtain records without first asking a judge.

"Now is not the time for us to be engaging in unilateral disarmament on the legal weapons now available for fighting terrorism," Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said.

He said that some of the most con-

troversial provisions of the Patriot Act have proven invaluable in fighting terrorism and aiding other investigations.

SAN FRANCISCO — The new chairman of the Federal Communications Commission told cable operators Tuesday to expect a continuation of the "deregulatory, not regulatory" environment established by the commission's former chairman, Michael Powell.

Kevin Martin, a lawyer and former FCC commissioner, was elevated

by President Bush last month to be the nation's top regulator of phone, broadcast, Internet and other telecommunications services.

Addressing the convention of the National Cable Television Association, Martin said market forces do a better job than excess regulation in encouraging innovation in the telecommunications industry by providing broader choices for consumers.

—Associated Press

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NANJING, China — At the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, signs of Japanese wartime atrocities are everywhere. Gory photos and engraved stone tablets exhort visitors to remember that past and hold Tokyo accountable.

Now, the Internet is doing the same job. In recent weeks, organizers claim to have collected more

than 24 million names on an Internet petition demanding that Japan be denied a permanent U.N. Security Council seat, claiming it has failed to apologize for wartime aggression against China.

The reported number of signers is more than a quarter of the 87 million Chinese people the government says use the Internet.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Militant groups posted Internet videos

Tuesday claiming to have beheaded an Iraqi soldier and killed an alleged informant, and insurgents launched attacks that left four U.S. troops dead.

The bombings and ambushes came after a relative lull in fighting, including the lowest monthly death toll for the U.S. military in a year: 34 service members killed in March.

Iraqi lawmakers prepared to name a new Iraqi president on Wednesday, taking a step toward building a new government and writing a permanent

constitution, paving the way to an eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops.

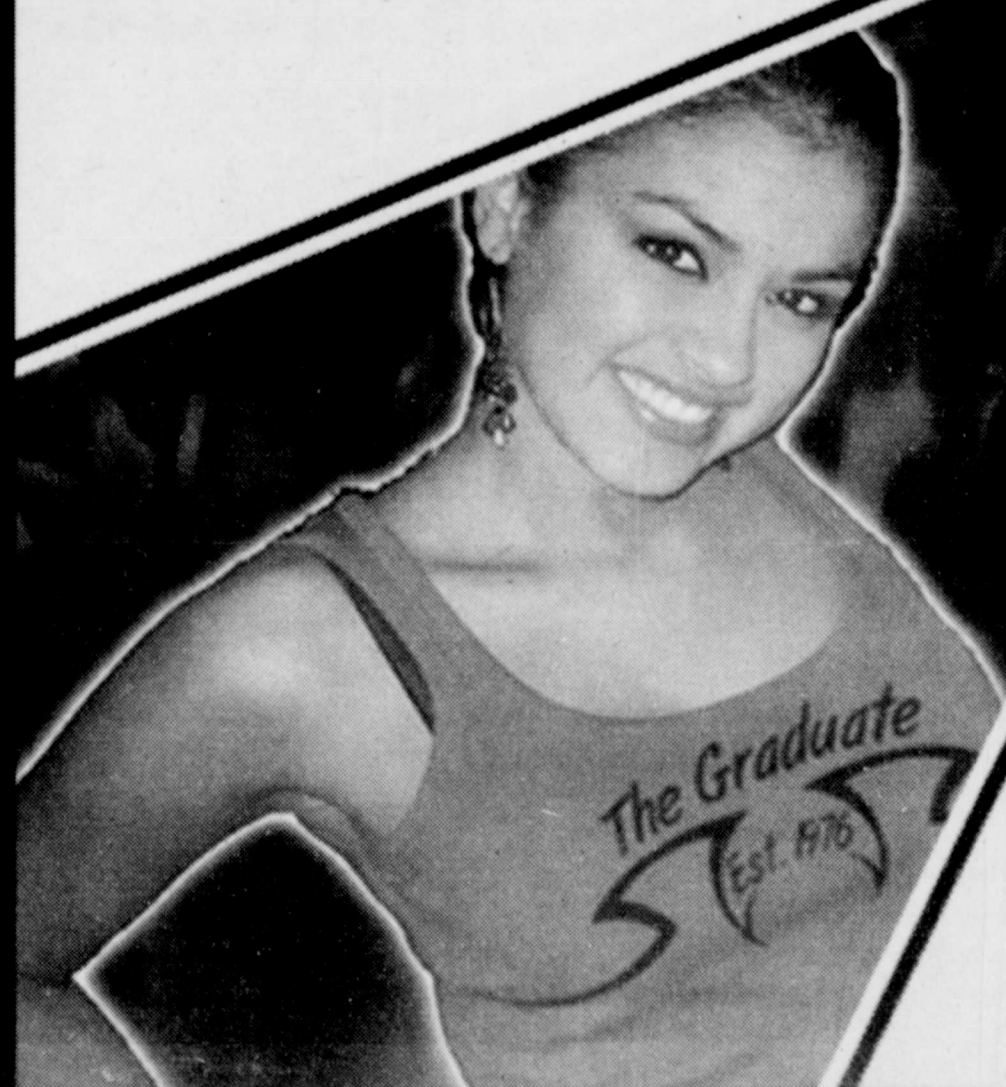
RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Security forces seized a walled compound Tuesday where Islamic militants had been barricaded for days, ending the kingdom's largest gunbattle with armed extremists. At least 14 of the militants were killed, including top leaders of the Saudi branch of al-Qaida, state television said.

—Associated Press

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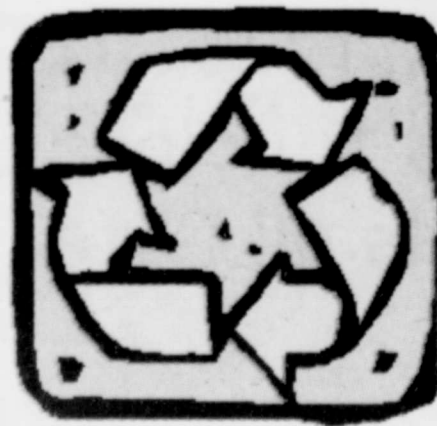
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Check out Thursday's Arts Cover, "In Denim We Trust," for a look inside everyone's classic look.

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Most popular songs on the continent



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2. 50 Cent — "Candy Shop"
3. Jennifer Lopez — "Get Right"
4. Gwen Stefani — "Rich Girl"
5. Sarah Connor — "From Zero to Hero"
6. Tony Christie — "Amarillo"
7. Ilona Mitredcey — "Un Monde Parfait"
8. Nelly — "Over and Over"
9. Moby — "Lift Me Up"
10. Nena — "Liebe Ist"
11. Mcfly — "All About You"
12. Fettes Brot — "Emanuela"
13. Daniel Powter — "Bad Day"
14. Green Day — "Boulevard of Broken Dreams"
15. Amel Bent — "Ma Philosophie"
16. Sinesemilia — "Tout Le Bonheur Du Monde"
17. Schnappi — "Schnappi Das Kleine Krokodil"
18. Chemical Brothers — "Galvanize"
19. The Game — "How We Do"
20. Sunset Strippers — "Falling Stars"

— Eurochart

COMMENTARY

Tegan, Sara and me

Before Tegan and Sara Quin could talk (or rock), they were already causing double trouble.

"When our mom took us into the pediatrician, she was concerned about our language development," Tegan said. "She mentioned that the two of us would babble and gargle to each other a lot. I guess that was our secret language."

Nowadays, they spill their stories to a slightly larger audience. As the folk-tinged pop duo Tegan and Sara, the identical twin sisters have a gift for sifting lovey happiness and lonely frustration into an eloquent, complex soundtrack. Their 2004 release, "So Jealous" (Vapor Records), pushed the 25-year-olds into some big-time gigs: a coveted spot at the Coachella Festival, late-night jams on "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and a tour slot with revivalist pretty boys The Killers.

(But the resumé fails to impress.)

"I never really had the goal of being a musician," Tegan said, relaxing backstage with the Art Beat before the pair's March 25 show in San Francisco. "I won't try to do it forever, either. Sara and I just grew up very creative people and this is one means of expression. We're lucky that people take to it."

At the tender age of 17, the twins first found the spotlight as the winners of Calgary's 1998 "Band Warz" competition, a sort of Gladiator-style faceoff between unsigned acts. (Yes, patriots, they're Canucks, but don't blame them.) Shortly after, they opened for Juliana Hatfield, embraced a few thousand new sisters at the Lilith Fair and released 2000's experimental "This Business of Art." Since that debut, they've also released the gentler "If It Was You" (2002) and shared the stage with a veritable stable of indie heroes, including Neil Young, Ryan Adams and Rufus Wainwright.

"We did kinda skip the whole struggling-artist-in-the-basement stage," Tegan admitted. "We basically started on a national level, but there's more than one way to be recognized, right?"

The question isn't waiting for an answer, and she likes it that way. In person, Tegan is warm and gracious, urging forth snacks like a petite den mother, not flinching when her interviewer takes furious slaps at an uncooperative tape recorder (thanks for nothing, RadioShack). She speaks rapidly and surely, waxing euphemistic on a variety of subjects with remarkable lack of concern for whatever rocker image she might want to cultivate. Between interview questions, she didn't hesitate to point out the one tattered suitcase she travels with or that the embroidered sweatshirt she sported was given to her the night before by a fan.

"I'm so broke," she said bluntly, perhaps unconsciously reaching for another free bottle of water. "I'm trying to save up to buy a house (in Vancouver), so I'm watching, like, every penny imaginable. I cut my own hair."

Little sis Sara, younger by eight minutes, lives thousands of miles away in Montreal, and the distance created a more independent songwriting method for "So Jealous." The continental divide also offered a welcome break from sisterly companionship.

"It's really nice to go home and be alone. Sara, especially, likes it," Tegan mused. "That's the stereotype, though, that twins have to be together all the time — we get that a lot."

And the branding doesn't end there. Tegan and Sara are, obviously, female musicians, but they are also both openly lesbian — and they must routinely bat off assumptions about both.

"We get put in that 'girl rock' category a lot, but is there 'boy rock'?" Tegan asked, her narrowed eyes the only betrayal of anger. "Being classified like that sucks. We come from a universal place and we're trying to speak to everyone ... And reporters ask us, 'Are you trying to use your sexuality to sell records?' And we say, 'No, you're trying to use it to sell papers.' We didn't even mention anything until reporters asked if we had boyfriends and we said that neither of us date men."

(It should be noted, at this point, that the Mustang Daily is free.)

"I mean, I don't want to pull the whole 'I'm misunderstood, I'm not influenced by anyone' thing," she continued, "but we work hard to go against that assumption and that doesn't change our music. Not many people talk about female musicians positively, at least not like they do for males. I'm a little envious."

Fair enough. So what else is Tegan "So Jealous" of?

"Oh man, everything," she said lightly. "I'm jealous of people with normal lives who wake up with someone they love every morning. I'm jealous of people who can afford nice clothes. I'm jealous of Sara because she has a good hairdresser. I'm jealous of bands that are good."

But that's the nice thing about being jealous," she concluded. "You get to the very height of it, then you realize you have it pretty good yourself."

Stacey Anderson is a journalism and music junior, KCPR DJ and a very spoiled only child. Catch her Sundays from 6 to 7 p.m. and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon on 91.3 FM or e-mail her at standers@calpoly.edu.



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Hypocrisy plagues Republican party

In recent weeks, the White House and the Republican leadership in Congress reached new heights of hypocrisy. As real issues face our nation, such as international terrorism, the Middle East peace process, Iraq, healthcare, the economy, the environment and poverty, Republicans debated and attempted to supercede court rulings that allowed for the removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube. Even President Bush took time off from his vacation to sign legislation hoping Schiavo's tube would be restored.

But when Bush was the governor of Texas, he signed legislation in contrast to the one he signed a few weeks ago. In the House debate on Schiavo, Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich, said, "If the president of the United States really cared about the issue of the removal of feeding tubes, then why did he sign a bill as governor in Texas that allows hospitals to save money by removing feeding tubes over a family's objection?"

I think I have the answer to Conyer's question. The republicans in power no longer care about conservative values, common sense or even other people. They may talk about the "culture of life," and use other euphemisms, but the fact remains they have become a selfish group who will say or do anything to hold on to power. They claim to represent the majority on every issue, but the majority of Americans supported the court's decision in the Schiavo case.

When we see congressional Republicans ditch conservative values, such as limited government, protecting privacy and promoting state rights, we should no longer be surprised. There's a lot to admire in conservative values, and it's unfortunate to see them undermined by the Republicans of today.

Schiavo, who had been in a vegetative state for 15 years died March 31, two weeks after her feeding tube was removed. When she died, Bush said he would, "continue to work to build a culture of life where all Americans are welcomed and valued and protected, especially those who live at the mercy of others." Now, if Bush believed this, where are his complaints about the 40 million Americans who lack health insurance or the 35 million Americans living in poverty?

This "culture of life" language is just another facade used to gain support from social conservatives. Republicans love to use euphemistic language in drumming up support for their programs such as the "Clear Skies Initiative," "No Child Left Behind" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom." They look good on paper but don't carry out their stated purpose. In fact, most of these programs actually do the opposite of what they're supposed to.

Interestingly enough, on March 17 Republicans rejected an amendment to a budget bill proposed by Sens. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., and Harry Reid, D-Nev., that offered a comprehensive plan to limit unwanted pregnancies and thus abortions. In addition, most of these Republicans and Bush opposed stem-cell research which in the future could possibly help people like Schiavo.

Right now, the Republican party contains many inconsistencies, contradictions and hypocrisies. There are many within the Party who see this and are enraged by what the Republican leadership has done. With this Republican hypocrisy, I agree with former Republican New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman who recently said, "It's time for the radical moderates." Sadly, the Republicans today have forgotten conservative and moderate values.

Josh Kob is a political science senior and a Mustang Daily columnist.

COMING TOMORROW

Campus Troubleshooter with Mustang Daily columnist Carrie McGourty



from **LEFT field**
political viewpoint

Kids make nutritious snacks
Miners refuse to work after death
New vaccine may contain rabies
Iraqi head seeks arms
Neil Armstrong bracelets: Fashion or charity?
Study of obesity looks for larger test group
Deaf college opens doors to hearing

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MUSTANG DAILY IS LOOKING FOR A 2005-06 EDITOR IN CHIEF

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Applicants must have at least two quarters experience on the Mustang Daily editorial staff

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MUSTANG DAILY CORRECTIONS

The Mustang Daily staff takes pride in publishing a daily newspaper for the Cal Poly campus and the neighboring community. We appreciate your readership and are thankful for your careful reading. Please send your correction suggestions to editor@mustangdaily.net.

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Send us your love, hate and more

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"My dad warned me not to play around keyboards."

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Turn

continued from page 8

Q. — What's been your biggest challenge so far this season?

A. — It's been a lot harder this year, as far as physically and mentally. I'm really trying to focus on wanting to be out there. It's just so much; the work and stress can be overwhelming. Sometimes I'm just like, "Oh my gosh" ... I think just the change in the coaching, and

everything we've had to do.

Q. — How did you feel after the game against Utah State?

A. — It was such a high. Everyone was so excited for me. That was the main thing, just how excited my team was for me. That's what made me feel the best. It's always nice to get a perfect game, but the support from my team was amazing. That was the best feeling. It goes down as one of the best days of

my life.

Q. — What are your plans for the future when this season is over?

A. — Hanging out. I'm looking forward to playing slow pitch, or slosh-ball, with my dad. I'm not trying to pursue a professional career in softball.

I think I'm pretty much done after this season. I'm just looking forward to graduating, and figuring out what I want to do.

friday FLASHBACK

A former player every week...

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 0223

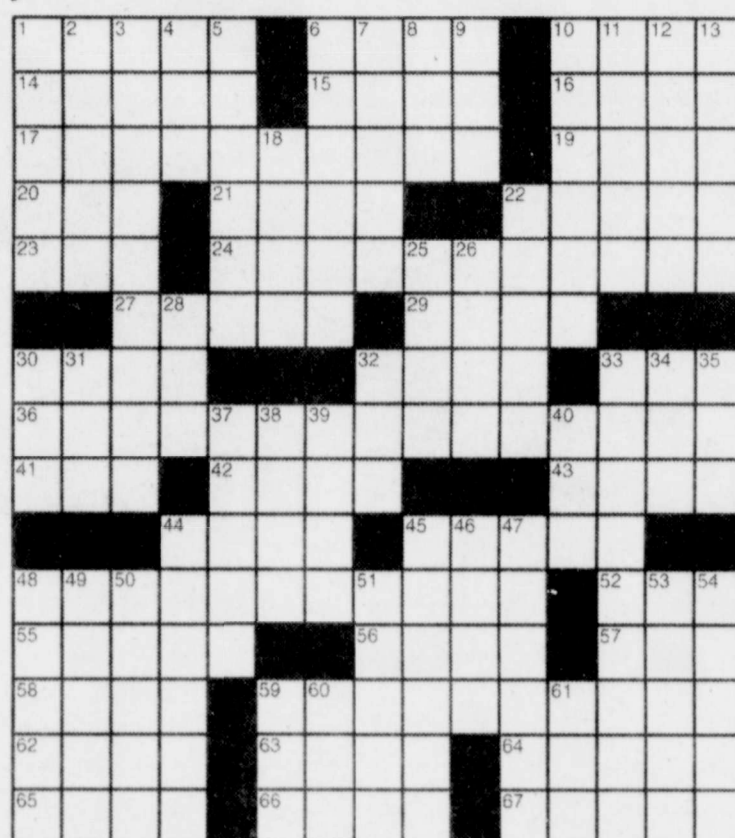
ACROSS

- 1 Chest adornment
6 Candidate for rehab
10 Somewhat, in music
14 Really go for
15 Boffo review
16 Apricot-shaped
17 Valentine's Day pastries?
19 Make rhapsodic
20 Top of a suit?
21 Mrs. Chaplin
22 Hardly suited for Mensa
23 Director Craven
24 Rainy months?
27 Sword handles
29 Pickled delicacies
30 A lot of binary code
32 Asian nurse

- 33 ___ mater (brain covering)
36 Subtly added mistakes? ... or a title for this puzzle
41 Part of marbling
42 Wild revelry
43 Rainfall measure
44 Suffix with buck
45 Areas usually decorated with stained glass
48 Attempt to score in hockey?
52 New Deal inits.
55 Viking attire
56 Teen spots?
57 Sibling, e.g.: Abbr.
58 "Yikes!"
59 Fork in a mountain pass?
62 Zola heroine
63 "... ___ sum"

DOWN

- 64 Try to bite
65 They lack refinement
66 It's held at eateries
67 "Later, dude!"
1 Colorful parrot
2 Draw forth
3 Horse player's buy
4 "Exodus" hero
5 Went first
6 Father of the Titans
7 Port south of Osaka
8 Time to revel, perhaps
9 Hi-___ graphics
10 Pretend to be
11 Pizza places
12 Playground retort
13 Bygone
18 Stallion, once
22 Indian metropolis
25 2004 Boston conventioners, informally
26 One of a Navy elite
28 Sun Devils' sch.
30 Clocked out
31 Anti-Brady Bill org.
32 In the least
33 Line of suits?



Puzzle by Lee Glickstein

- 34 "Monsters, ___" (2001 animated film)
35 Bone china component
37 Column style
38 Will or fist precursor
39 Really eager
40 Pizza
44 Nike rival
45 Blessing evoker
46 Swimming site
47 Suds holders
48 Minutes taker, maybe
49 Indiana senator Richard
50 Really dumb
51 Needing a lift
53 5/8/45
54 Prince Valiant's lady
59 Hesitation sound
60 Public radio host Glass
61 Compete

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ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

HAVENS SEC SKID
IDIDIT TRY KENO
MARTHADANDRIDGE
ONT RUR APSES
MOUNTVERNON
IRE OMICRON
AMIGO LORN RIPE
VIRGINIAMILITIA
ELAL ABRA ESTER
ROSELLE MAT
VALLEYFORGE
ALIBI IAN AOL
CONTINENTALARMY
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BEST IN THE WEST

Big West Conference baseball preview



Erick Smith
MUSTANG DAILY

With Big West play beginning, Cal Poly will face the defending national champion, another perennial powerhouse and five other teams.

The Mustangs kicked off conference play, which runs until May 29, as one of only two teams to sweep their series last weekend. Cal Poly improved to 20-12 in knocking off Cal State Northridge, outscoring the Matadors 23-6.

But Northridge, 12-14-1, pales in comparison to the Long Beach State 49ers and the Cal State Fullerton Titans, who the Mustangs don't face for another month.

The Titans finished last year as the Big West and NCAA National Champions and are primed to make a run as a contender again this year. Currently the No. 1-ranked team in the nation according to Collegiate Baseball, Fullerton went 2-1 this past weekend and boasts an overall record of 20-7.

They have taken six of nine games, each time finishing the three-game series with a record of 2-1, against No. 3 Tulane, No. 11 Arizona and No. 12 Stanford. Their only misstep came against No. 13 Long Beach when the Titans lost two of three games.

"Fullerton is loaded with everything," Mustang coach Larry Lee said. "They are the total package and they do everything extremely well."

The Titans boast the Big West's

offensive statistics as they have an average of .324, and are the only team to hit above .300 in the conference. They also have scored the most runs, 209, and are second in hits behind Cal Poly with 310. They've homered 28 times yet hold the lowest amount of strikeouts with 173.

Leading the Titans hitting squad are infielders senior Ronnie Prettyman and sophomore Brett Pill. Prettyman is hitting .382, making him the Big West leader in batting average. He also has 23 RBIs, 24 runs and 10 doubles. Pill has a .325 average, and is among the top five in runs scored, RBIs and total bases.

Titan pitchers rank second in the conference in team pitching behind Long Beach, with a 3.68 ERA giving up 203 hits, 116 runs, 98 earned, while striking out 212 batters.

In conference play, the Titans' three-game series against UC Irvine (14-13, 1-2) ended in Fullerton's favor, as they won the final two games after gathering only three hits and one run in their first game loss, 5-1.

Such an upset demonstrates Lee's thoughts that anybody can beat anybody at any time.

"There is a lot of parity in the conference," Lee said. "This should create a dog fight to the end of the season."

Conference play enables all eight teams in the Big West to play one another in a three-game series with the top teams being selected to represent the Big West in the NCAA tournament.

Lee said he hopes to see a minimum of four teams represent the Big West this year in the NCAA National Tournament.

"The Big West has fared well against other national conferences," said Lee. "It is as good as any conference in the country."

Long Beach took care of the last place UC Riverside Highlanders, who are 12-15 and 0-3 in conference play, as the 49ers gave up only two runs while scoring 11 in the series. With the sweep, the 49ers have won five of their past six games while UC Riverside has dropped five of its past six.

Rounding out the conference is Pacific (14-16, 2-1), and UC Santa Barbara (14-15, 1-2) who met last weekend. Pacific took two of three games.

Leading Pacific is senior right-handed relief pitcher Josh Schmidt who holds a conference leading 1.07 ERA.

Schmidt has appeared in 19 games this season and has six saves while striking out 48 batters and only walking 15.

UCSB has come to rely upon Matt Wilkerson, a senior outfielder, who has been named a two time Big West Player of the Week this year. Wilkerson leads the Big West in RBIs with 31 and is tied for second in the conference with seven home runs and is hitting .327.

Other teams in the Big West are looking to their top players to lead their teams through conference play.

For the Mustangs, the driving force at the plate has been senior

catcher Kyle Blumenthal, named Big West Player of the Week this week; it is his second time being awarded that honor this year. He has the fifth highest batting average in the conference at .357, has 30 RBIs, 23 runs and in the past four games he has reached base safely in his last 15 plate appearances.

Another strong hitter for Poly is junior outfielder Brandon Roberts, who has a .323 average and is the Big West leader in hits, 41, and runs scored, 30. He also ranks second with 13 steals in 16 attempts.

Junior southpaw pitcher Garrett Olson is Cal Poly's Friday night starter. He is 6-2 with a 3.03 ERA and a conference leading 79 strikeouts in 11 appearances this season.

"Olson is having a tremendous season," Lee said. "He sets the tone going into a weekend series."

Cesar Ramos, the Friday night starting pitcher for Long Beach, has compiled a 6-3 record with a 1.61 ERA, 58 strikeouts thus far and has been named Big West Pitcher of the Week twice this season.

The Anteaters of UC Irvine rely on standout Chris Nicoll, a right-handed junior starting pitcher, who has 53 strikeouts, 2.28 ERA and a record of 4-1 this season.

At the plate for Cal State Northridge, infielder Erik Hagerstrom is hitting .380 and has driven in 16 runs while scoring 16.

He also is third in the Big West with 16 walks.

THE ATHLETE'S TURN

This week's spotlight on ...



Softball pitcher
Eva Nelson

Kristen Oato
MUSTANG DAILY

Senior Eva Nelson has had quite a year. Nelson is playing her final season as a pitcher for the Cal Poly softball team. Earlier this season, Nelson pitched her first perfect game against Utah State in the Big West Conference. The Mustang Daily had a chance to talk to Nelson about her softball origins and her year so far.

Q. — How did you begin playing softball?

A. — I was born in San Luis Obispo and grew up here. The big thing here growing up was dance. When we moved to Salinas, playing sports was the thing to do. My family lived close to this little park where they had a small softball league. That's how I got into it.

Q. — Were you always a pitcher?

A. — No. I didn't start pitching right away. I started playing when I was nine, and probably began pitching around 11 or 12.

Q. — How do you think the team has changed since you started playing for Cal Poly?

A. — When Lisa Boyer was coaching for my first three years, the team was pretty consistent every year. Now that we have our new coach, Jenny (Condon), things have changed completely. Everything is more intense; we are more hardcore softball. Not that it wasn't hardcore before, but it's just intense. She focuses on the mental aspect of the game and she makes sure we're out there whenever we can get out there practicing. She drills us into the ground. She's just no mercy. She pushes us to the limits.

Q. — Do you think the team has responded well to that?

A. — I do. Especially the younger girls. That's what is really going to make a difference, because they're going to be here longer. For the seniors it was shock, because we weren't used to that. But the other girls are super intense about the game. They're going all for it. They're totally into it. Everyone is definitely responding well to it.

Q. — Who are you close to on the team?

A. — Erin (Myers) has been so amazing this year. We just work really well together as a pitcher/catcher combination. I owe a lot to her because she frames the ball so well, and she calms me down. I just think she's been amazing, even though she's in so much pain with her knee injury.

TOP PERFORMERS *a look at the conference's brightest stars...*

MICHAEL PAULK

CS Northridge
First base

A preseason Player of the Year candidate after batting .354 with 17 HRs and 59 RBI in 2004.



CESAR RAMOS

Long Beach State
Starting pitcher

Jered Weaver the Second? Ramos is 6-3 with a 1.61 ERA in 10 starts and 72.2 innings.



JOSH SCHMIDT

Pacific
Relief pitcher

Tiger closer has six saves, 48 strikeouts, and a 0.80 ERA through 33.2 innings.



MATT WILKERSON

UC Santa Barbara
Catcher

Hitting .330 with 7 HR, 31 RBI, .431 OBP and .557 SLG.



CHRIS NICOLL

UC Irvine
Starting pitcher

Is 4-1 with a 2.28 ERA, .222 OBP and 53 Ks, against only 13 walks, in 51.1 IP.



see Turn, page 7